

**Williamstown Town Manager Search Committee Meeting  
June 14, 2021 5:30 - 6:45 PM**

In Attendance:

Jose Constantine	Melisa Cragg	Hugh Daley	Dan Gura
Chris Kapiloff	Dave Moresi	Ngoni Munemo	Jane Patton
Geraldine Shen	Abigail Reifsnnyder		

Not In Attendance:

Susan Puddester

Consultants:

Lee Szymborski                      Mike Jaillet

Hugh Daley started the meeting by announcing that this is not a webinar but a meeting and participation in this meeting will be limited to the members. There will not be an opportunity for public comments, but members of the public are welcome to view the meeting.

Jane Patton announced that there would be a hard stop to the meeting because a Select Board meeting immediately follows. She thanked all who have accepted the Board's invitation to serve on this important search committee. She read from a document titled "Guidelines for Dialog" prepared by Carrie Nichol for a Board Retreat that is pertinent to the functioning of the committee.

- We will do our best to be authentic in our contributions.
- We will keep what is discussed here confidential (aspects that are not in open session). Sharing what we learned, but not specifics of who said what.
- We will recognize that our intent is not always the same as our impact.
- We will seek to avoid generalizations and blame.
- We will attend to our own rules and identities; we cannot control others.
- We will treat this as a space for learning and will be open to new perspectives and ideas, even when they do not feel entirely comfortable.
- We will attend to the time and space we occupy, making space for others when we recognize that we have spoken enough and taking space for ourselves when we know we have been too quiet.

Hugh Daley stated that the purpose of this meeting is to present the organization of the committee, get a sense of our calendar, start talking about ideas and how to receive community input and get a broad first blush of the skills and attributes of the next Town Manager. The way the meeting will work tonight is for the committee to have this discussion and then over the next two weeks to receive community input on the items we are discussing. The next meeting may start with some public comment. In general this is how the meetings will flow.

Jane Patton pointed out that a specific email was set up for receiving feedback [TMSearch@gmail.com](mailto:TMSearch@gmail.com). This will ensure that there is a record of comments and that it doesn't get lost or misinterpreted. The comments then will be sent out to the committee members.

Hugh Daley noted that information was sent out to the committee member on open meeting law and how best to comply with it. Big bright lime rules are:

- If you get an email, don't reply at all, especially if you are expressing an opinion.
- If outside of a meeting you happen to see someone on the committee, you can be sociable, but refrain from discussing committee work. The purpose of the open meeting law is for the community to be able to witness the discussions and decisions of the committee of the committee as a fish bowl where discussions and decisions are in full view of the public - thinking out loud.

Hugh Daley then asked everyone to introduce themselves, which committee members and consultants did.

Lee walked through the components of the search calendar, referring to the draft calendar he screen-shared on the zoom. He acknowledged the calendar needs updating.

Jane Patton asked Lee to elaborate on how the candidates are narrowed down to a smaller number of candidates for further review (from say 40 to 8 to 12).

Lee used the example of the committee indicating that the position requires a Master's Degree, then that is one of the elements that all the proposed candidates will have to meet. Another example is if we understand that one of the skills that is important for the next Town Administrator to have is experience in economic development or particularly strong background in finance, our conversations with the candidates will focus on these skills. The focus on whether a candidate progresses is based on subjective criteria (for example a minimum number of years of progressively responsible positions in municipal government) that the committee has indicated is a priority.

Jose Constantine expressed the community desire that the pool of candidates be as diverse as possible and the concern that the consultant-led process might eliminate some of that diversity from the presented candidates. Lee responded that GovHR is proud that it has established fostering diversity as an important goal and, as an example, has established relationships with such groups as the National Forum for Black Public Administrators. He assured the committee that we will bring forward a diverse group of candidates.

Lee ended his presentation on the process and the committee began its discussions.

Jose Constantine asked if the consultant firm, who is working on other recruitments, is helping the candidates in the competition among the various communities looking to fill similar positions. How does the process work?

Lee indicated that there is less of a conflict than you might imagine for what candidates might be interested. There are some that might be out of a job that might be open to more communities, but what you generally find is that job searches are limited to general areas and communities meeting certain criteria. There may even be an advantage in that the firm may identify a candidate in one search that would be a good fit for this position and can reach out and encourage that person to apply.

Abigail Reifsnnyder asked if once the committee has identified the three final candidates does the Select Board engage in a dialog to seek further input on how the committee ranks the candidates? She asked because of the recent confusion in the selection of an Interim Police Chief.

Hugh Daley responded that the Board is looking for the committee to pick four candidates it feels comfortable would best fill the positions, but it is the Board that will make the final decision on who becomes the Town Manager. The last time three candidates were forwarded but one dropped out and the Board considered the two remaining. The committee may have its preference, but Hugh advised the committee to avoid what happened in the selection of an Interim Police Chief.

Jane Patton remembered that the search committee split into two groups, split the candidate pool alphabetically into group A and B, both interview groups interviewed the candidates, then the two groups came back with their ranking and the selection was made of the candidates to present to the Select Board without ranking of preference. It was fascinating that the rankings of the groups differed and it required much discussion to select the final candidates.

Geraldine Shen asked if the consultants ever provide the committee with a breakdown of all the candidates on a grid noting the reason for including and excluding candidates.

Lee noted that the reason for hiring consultants is to reduce the process for the committee. We will however provide the committee with a list of the candidates with positions that each has held that will make it apparent why candidates were not brought forward. We have developed a matrix for a number of clients that keys in on the hard skills and backgrounds of the candidates and all the other things the committee is looking for.

Ngoni Munemo sought verification of his understanding of the stages for narrowing the field of candidates and asked if the consultants will track the composition of the pool through the stages so the committee can see how demographics change through the various stages at least in summary form? He also made the point that on search committees he has served on, the decision to advance and not advance candidates always rest with the committee. He suggested that the candidates could be presented with the criteria they satisfy and not and left to the committee to determine what risk it is willing to take.

Lee noted the need to explore the capacity for going outside the boundaries. We will seek the committee's advice on that. Having been town managers ourselves, we have radar of candidates that might have some potential even though they might be on the edge of some of the criteria. Mike noted

that on the recruitment he and Lee are currently working on one candidate didn't quite meet all of the criteria, but was brought forward to the committee who discussed the possibility of bringing that candidate forward and decided not to. If diversity is very important, we could do the same for those candidates. Lee has had experience bringing forward a wildcard candidate to clients who were ultimately pleased with the result.

Chris Kapiloff asked if the committee could identify one or two of its members to work closely with Lee and Mike on reviewing and narrowing the field of candidates to keep the committee and community updated on the transparency of the process?

Lee responded that he has never done it that way, but he would like to understand a little bit more about the suggestions and possibly discuss it more.

Hugh Daley noted that it is a committee of 10, which makes it difficult to schedule meetings with everyone in attendance. The suggestion of sub-groups to work on certain aspects of this process might be worth thinking about for Mike and Lee.

Hugh Daley suggested that for community input ideas everyone might agree that a community input survey might be the best approach. He asked for thumbs up for the concept and determined that there is sufficient support for the idea and asked Lee to provide a couple more samples for consideration. He asked members to provide Lee with the questions they believe should be included.

Challenges and skills of the next Town Manager should be provided to Lee in writing to be condensed and brought back to the committee. Lee agreed with the suggested format.

Meeting schedule will be left to Lee noting that 48 hour (not including weekends and holidays) posting of the meeting is required. Hugh Daley mentioned that he rather move more slowly through the step and get it done right.

Lee summarized what he is responsible for:

- An updated calendar
- Initial listing of committee member comments on traits, attributes and challenges for the next Town Manager
- Poll the committee on meeting dates
- Provide a couple more samples community surveys

Hugh Daley asked for a motion to adjourn which was made and seconded. It was the unanimous vote, taken by polling each member, to adjourn the meeting.